

1. Multi-Jurisdictional Recommendations

- a. The Commission recommends that federal, State, and local fire agencies implement 4-0 staffing for all fire engine companies responding to OES mutual aid calls for immediate, planned responses, and set the goal of 4-0 staffing for Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) initial attack response.

Response: The Department currently implements 4-0 staffing, four (4) firefighters per engine, on all fire engines responding to OES mutual aid calls in the WUI.

- b. The Commission recommends that all firefighters responding to WUI fires be provided with the necessary wildland personal protective gear, and safety and communications equipment.

Response: The Department currently provides all firefighters responding to WUI fires with the necessary wildland personal protective gear, and safety and communications equipment.

- c. The Commission recommends that the Joint Legislature Committee on Emergency Services and Homeland Security convene with appropriate representatives of federal, State, and local governments to build upon existing governmental efforts to develop a comprehensive interagency, intergovernmental wildland vegetation management plan for California, and integrate the plan's direction into revised or amended federal, State and local land management land use plans.

Response: Staff from our Department's Forestry Division currently coordinate vegetation management projects with federal, State, and local fire and emergency agencies including the planning, identification and implementation of hazard mitigation projects.

- d. The Commission recommends that in the WUI areas, the Statewide Fire Safe Council promote the establishment of local "Fire Safe Councils" and encourages federal, State, and local governments to assist in this effort.

Response: Department staff is actively involved with establishing Fire Safe Councils within Los Angeles County. Fire Safe Councils have been established in Topanga Canyon, City of Monrovia, and the communities of Green Valley, Leona Valley, and Juniper Hills. Staff is currently working with the Ganesha Hills Homeowners Association in the City of Pomona to establish a Fire Safe Council.

3. State Recommendations

- a. The Commission recommends that the Mountain Area Safety Task Force (MAST) type programs be considered as a model for Fire Safe Council efforts in target areas.

Response: The Mountain Area Safety Taskforce (MAST) organizations are active in both San Bernardino and Riverside Counties. The task force is comprised of governmental organizations, private companies, and volunteer organizations concerned with public safety in the mountain areas of their respective jurisdictions. Their efforts focus to reduce the current region-wide risk of a major fire and to minimize impacts on mountain communities should one occur. A five-point action plan has been initiated as follows: (1) assure public safety; (2) obtain funds; (3) reduce fuel and create firebreaks; (4) develop commercial use or disposal options for waste wood products; and (5) identify and develop plans for ensuring long-term forest sustainability.

Staff from our Department's Fire Plan Unit assess the fuel conditions throughout the County and identify hazard mitigation projects. This includes identifying assets at risk and working with stakeholders, such as Fire Safe Councils, local agencies, homeowners associations, businesses and private industries to develop a fire mitigation plan. Staff is currently developing a County-wide fire plan that will integrate the responsibilities and mitigation efforts for wildland fires.

Additionally, because of the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000, FEMA has required that Los Angeles County submit an Emergency Preparedness Plan by the Fall of 2004. Staff has completed the Fire Department's assessments including wildland fires, earthquakes and homeland security. The plan will link emergency preparedness efforts among County departments.

4. Local Recommendations

- a. The Commission recognizes the critical roles of timely emergency notification to the public of imminent threats and recommends that local governments prioritize the development of appropriate early warning systems to address the needs of their communities.

Response: The Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department has an early warning emergency notification system in place to notify residents of imminent threats. The notifications are made in the following ways: (1) door to door; (2) an Emergency Alert System (EAS) where notifications are released by broadcasts through local radio and television stations; (3) an Auto Dialing System where residents are notified through an automated dialing and message system; and (4) the Los Angeles Disaster Communication Service where notifications are made by amateur radio operators.

- b. The Commission recommends that local governments improve public outreach and emergency evacuation education.

Response: An "Operation Evacuation" pamphlet was developed after the 1993 wildfires in Los Angeles County to educate the public on evacuation procedures. The pamphlet is distributed at numerous public education events throughout the County.

The Blue Ribbon Fire Commission Report recommendations will require the County of Los Angeles Fire Department to become actively involved in the following projects:

1. Greater involvement with local communities to develop Fire Safe Councils.
Fire Safe Councils are comprised of a coalition of public and private organizations that share a common, vested interest in wildfire prevention and loss mitigation. Councils are dedicated to saving lives and reducing fire losses by making their communities fire safe.
2. Greater involvement with homeowners associations and local communities to obtain Fire Plan Grant funding to assist with completing vegetation management projects. Fire Department staff will assist homeowners associations with applying for State and Federal grant funding to subsidize vegetation management projects in the community.

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This will include utilizing goats and mechanical equipment such as chippers to reduce the fuel loading within a community

Additionally, numerous changes to the Fire Code and the implementation of the Fuel Modification Plan requirements were initiated following the disastrous 1993 wildfires in Los Angeles County. The budgetary barriers identified in the Blue Ribbon Fire Commission Report have not been experienced by the County of Los Angeles Fire Department and have not inhibited us from achieving our mission.

The Governor's Office on Emergency Services (OES) has briefed the Governor's staff on the recommendations identified in the Blue Ribbon Fire Commission Report. Additionally, I have met with several legislative members that were members of the Blue Ribbon Commission and they are moving forward with the implementation of the Select Legislative Committee recommended in the report.

Additional meetings of the Blue Ribbon Fire Commission are scheduled six months after the submission of the report and again six months later to assess the progress in implementing the Commission's recommendations. I will keep the Board informed on the progress of the Commission.

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